

Basic Detail Report



Galatea-M

Vessel number

HV000171

Date

1958

Primary Maker

Alf Jahnsen

Description

GALATEA-M is a modified Laurent Giles-designed Normandy Class yacht launched in 1958 with the intention of competing in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. To meet the 7.3 m (24 ft) minimum waterline length for entrants in the ocean race, the builder, Alf Jahnsen, from Forster in NSW, was directed by the owner, Sydney dentist Wally Kestal, to lengthen the design by about 600mm (2 ft). Alf Jahnsen was an important builder in the

mid-north coast of NSW area in the 1950s. Jahnsen worked with prominent Forster/Tuncurry builder Ernest Wright, part of the Wright and Son Shipyard operational between 1875 to 1958. Wright and Sons built several steamers used on the North Coast including the Bellinger, Tuncurry II, and the Comboyne. Jahnsen worked with Ernest Wright during World War II when the shipyard fulfilled major orders for Australian Army, US Army and Royal Navy. Jahnsen designed and built BJ (HV000563) in 1949, a tug that facilitated a punt and launch service connecting the two towns Forster and Tuncurry. This passenger service was critical for a decade until the opening of Forster Tuncurry Bridge in 1959. He also built the bigger ocean racing yacht WRAITH OF ODIN and is known to have built a ferry for the Shoalhaven river area. GALATEA-M was built with splined oregon planking above the waterline and teak planking below. The teak came as logs from Burma which the owner organised to be sawn and finished in Australia. The original engine was a Stuart Turner petrol auxiliary. A colleague of the owner, Jack Esdaile, hand-made a number of the fittings. Unfortunately for the fastidious owner, the yacht's mast came down and damaged the superstructure while it was sailing south on the delivery voyage to Sydney. The cause was a simple forestay rigging swage that failed. Kestal sailed with the Middle Harbour Yacht Club and entered GALATEA-M in the 1961 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. The yacht finished 30th overall, but Kestal entered again the next year, and lined up in a fleet which included the big American yawl ONDINE. Kestal was 54, but his crew were mostly teenagers; Ian Likely (15), Peter Hopwood and Rhody Thomas (both 16), and Ian Outhred (20). In a race remembered for its favourable conditions and new race record by ONDINE, GALATEA-M was the surprise packet. The smallest boat and youngest crew came 3rd overall and won Division 2. In February 1963 Seacraft Magazine called GALATEA-M the dark horse of the race and reported that it ' was extremely well sailed to

gain third place and beat many larger yachts off the stick'. Kestal eventually gave the boat to his son Paul who trucked GALATEA-M to Perth, where it sailed on the Swan River and offshore to Rottnest Island. A subsequent owner who bought the craft from Paul Kestal refurbished it with new teak decks and a Bukh diesel engine. The next owner continued the work but painted the cabin house exterior, which until then had been oiled teak. GALATEA-M underwent major restoration work in 2022, its mast replaced on the lower third starboard side section and the scarf join reversed up near the spreader. The topsides were also rebuilt, along with work to the teak deck, re-varnishing, and work to the interior. As of 2023 Galatea-M is moored in Paradise Beach on Pittwater.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 8.84 m x 7.31 m x 2.48 m x 1.93 m, 7.43 tonnes (29 ft x 24 ft x 8.15 ft x 6.33 ft, 7.55 tons)